

SEPTEMBER 26, 1974

Hombres who recently were running from a drouth are wading to their barns. Many of the farm-to-market roads and all their trails are closed by flood water. Once again the Shortgrass Country has switched from a desert to a grassland.

Herders in our area have been hard hit by the weather all year. Good rains fell in the end of April. Had we been lucky enough to have continued the drouth, we might have got rid of our cattle on a decent market.

Rain causes a lot more trouble than folks like to admit. One-sixteenth of an inch can make a sheep man wilder with his checkbook than the top end of a herd from Borneo. Cow and calf operators will run young cows up in the ring past all reason when they're backed by a dew. I have seen old boys so broke they were fixing their own flat tires buy a new pickup after a wet spell.

Wet weather keeps people indoors, also. I was sitting around the house yesterday fretting so hard that my knuckles turned white underneath my skin.

Nothing was any good. The confounded television newscasters were fussing about President Ford pardoning Mr. Nixon. I got to thinking that if the newsmen had to stay home like Mr. Nixon and myself they'd be of a more forgiving nature.

Don't you know Mrs. Nixon has been sight since her husband lost his job and that nice house they were living in? People are surprised that he's been seen out walking on the beach. I bet he's had such a bad case of stall fever that the beach was a short track.

I didn't expect so much furor over pardoning the former president. Married men, at least, should have supported clemency. Back when Mr. Nixon got in another jam, he had his old dog "Checkers" to help bail him out. Though I haven't heard, Checkers is probably too old to be much comfort, or maybe dead and gone.

I know what it's like not to have a pet dog for company during times of stress. Child Who Sits in the Sun keeps dogs and cats, but they are so mean that I have to carry a walking stick around the house to keep them from tearing into my hind leg. Dogs have contributed a whole to the suffering of mankind. It doesn't matter to a dog if his master doesn't make it home until late at night. Pool hall dust or bar stool wrinkles don't destroy their loyalty or set off a broom to swinging or a hot iron to flying.

More dogs should be given as wedding presents. Many an old boy has slept on a storm cellar door, comforted by his pooch hound. Doctors and school teachers say they carry germs, but doctors and school teachers don't realize how bad the night air can be on a fellow sleeping outside by himself.

The papers say the rains will help the sheep trade. Cowboys are excited, too. About nine million acres of winter wheat would come in mighty handy to un-pressure the cattle situation. Farmers are as hopeless of being cured of the calf disease as the rest of us are. All it'll take will be a neighbor to slip off and buy a gooseneck load to start an epidemic. There never was a time that we needed an outbreak so bad.

My word is going to be that we are going to make it through a good winter. Water and grass will carry a herder and his banker a long ways.

I'm going to look around Mertzon for a dog for Mr. Nixon. You see, I know what it's like to be in trouble.